

PATENT SPECIFICATION

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(54) COMMUNICATION AID

(71) I, CHARLES OWEN, a British subject of 86 Town Mill Brow, College Bank, Rochdale, Lancashire, do hereby declare the invention, for which I pray that a Patent may be granted to me, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

This invention relates to a communication aid to facilitate communication between people using different languages.

In the case where people speaking different languages wish to communicate with each other it is possible to use phrase books and like translation aids but such aids are generally complicated, inconvenient and unreliable, particularly having regard to problems which may arise in connection with pronunciation.

An object of the present invention is to provide a communication aid which is simple, convenient and reliable and with which problems with regard to pronunciation can be overcome or at least reduced.

According to the invention therefore there is provided a communication aid comprising a container, a set of cards on each of which is a collection of communicable expressions, the different collections being respectively in different languages and the expressions of each collection corresponding respectively to the expressions of the or each other collection, location means in said container adapted to receive said set of cards with two cards of said set in relative side-by-side disposition whereby relative juxtaposition of said corresponding expressions is effected.

With this arrangement, two people can communicate with each other using different languages by using said aid having said collections in the pertaining different languages. One person can select an expression from the appropriate collection in his own language and then, using the aid, he can identify the corresponding expression in the collection in the other language. The said corresponding expression can then be pointed out to the other person. In this way it will be appre-

ciated that communication between the persons involved can be effected in a simple, convenient manner and without need for any expression to be spoken whereby pronunciation problems can be avoided.

With regard to the expressions, these may be of a visually alphanumeric nature, comprising, e.g. words, phrases, sentences and/or numbers. Alternatively or additionally, however, other forms of the expressions may be used such as pictorial representations of Braille markings.

The indication means may comprise a visual system comprising for example appropriate identification marks provided adjacent the expressions. Alternatively or additionally, the indication means may comprise means for effecting arrangement of the respective collections of the or each set in predetermined physical relationship to each other whereby the correspondence between expressions is effected due to the juxtaposition of same.

In the case where the expressions are of a composite nature, as for example in the case where the expressions are phrases or sentences, the said indication means may be adapted to indicate the correspondence of component parts of the composite expressions as well as the correspondence of the expressions themselves.

There may be a plurality of different sets of said cards each set relating to a respective common subject. The cards may be identified, by colour coding or otherwise, to indicate the set to which each collection belongs. The cards may also be identified by colour coding or otherwise to indicate the language of each collection.

Each set may comprise more than two collections whereby communication in a plurality of different language combinations is possible using different combinations of collections of the same set.

With regard to the term language, as used herein this term is to be interpreted as covering all kinds of systems for representing and communicating information. The term is not therefore restricted to spoken languages but

also includes other systems such as Braille.

It is also to be understood that, although it is visualised that each collection will normally comprise a plurality of expressions, in certain circumstances each collection of a particular set may comprise only a single expression.

In one embodiment of the invention each collection is printed or otherwise applied to a surface of the card, and a transparent plastics wallet is provided into which such card can be inserted. With this arrangement, the wallet provides for achieving the required juxtaposition of the expressions of different collections such as to indicate the correspondence thereof and/or the transparent plastics wallet can provide a surface which can be marked, with an appropriate marker, to indicate a selected expression, such marking subsequently being removable by wiping the surface. It is also possible to use plastics coated cards which can be marked directly and subsequently wiped clean. Alternatively, transparent cards may be used in conjunction with a markable surface on which the transparent cards can be superimposed. The markable surface may be defined by a marker board of the kind on which marks can be made with a stylus by causing a thin sheet to adhere to a backing surface, such marks being erasable by withdrawing the backing surface and thin sheet in such a manner as to separate same.

The invention will now be described further by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:—

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of one form of a communication aid according to the present invention; and

Fig. 2 is a plan view of an alternative form of a communication aid.

The aid of Fig. 1 comprises three open topped plastics wallets, 1, 2, 3 hinged together in edge-to-edge disposition so as to define a wallet assembly which can be folded flat whereby it may fit conveniently into a persons pocket, handbag, briefcase or the like.

Two of the wallets 1, 2 are formed from transparent plastics material and the other wallet 3 is formed from an opaque plastics material. A pocket 4 is provided for a marker 5 of the felt-tip kind.

The communication aid also includes a number of sets of cards 6. The cards are of slightly smaller dimensions than the wallets 1, 2, 3 so that they can fit in the wallets. One wallet 1 is adapted to receive a single card but the other wallets 2, 3 are larger and can receive several cards for storage purposes.

Each set of cards comprises several cards 6 which have a common identification 7 at the top thereof. This identification 7, as

shown in the drawing, may comprise coloured portions at the top corners in conjunction with a code letter. One card 6 of each set is the 'Master' card and has phrases on one surface of same in English. The phrases relate to a common subject, such as medical (accident and illness), finding accommodation, travel, ordering meals or general requests. Each phrase 8 is identified by a number 9 adjacent same. Further each phrase 8 is subdivided into words or groups of words which are enclosed in numbered boxes 10. There are statement 11, 12 in English at the top and at the bottom of the card such as "Please read the following" and "Thank you" or other expression.

The other cards 6 of each set are "communication units" and each such unit has phrases 13 on one surface thereof in a common language other than English. The phrases 13 are provided in the same order and have the same meaning as the English phrases 8 on the Master card of the same set. The phrases 13 on each communication unit are identified by numbers 14 have words thereof enclosed in numbered boxes 15 in a manner corresponding to the numbering of the phrases 8 and boxes 10 of the Master card.

A foreign language phrase 13 on one communication unit which corresponds to a selected English language phrase 8 on the Master card of the same set can therefore be found by comparison of the identification numbers 9, 14. Similarly the word or words in a foreign language phrase 13 which correspond to a selected word or words in the corresponding English language phrase 8 can be found by comparison of the numbers of the boxes 10, 15. In this respect it will be noted that the number of words in the foreign language phrase and/or the order thereof may be different from the number and order of the words in the corresponding English language phrase whereby corresponding words cannot be determined simply by comparison of word position.

Each communication unit also has top and bottom foreign language statements 16, 17 corresponding to the top and bottom English language statement 11, 12 of the Master card of the same set.

In use, in order to enable an English speaking person to communicate with a foreign language speaking person, the English language Master card and the appropriate foreign language communication unit of a selected set, which set relates to the subject matter to be communicated, are withdrawn from the storage wallets 2, 3. The Master card is inserted in the wallet 1 so that the phrases 8 thereon are visible through the wallet 1, and the communication unit is inserted on top of other stored cards in the transparent storage wallet 2 so that the foreign

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language phrases 13 thereon are visible through the wallet 2 alongside the Master card.

In this position the foreign language phrases 13 are disposed respectively adjacent the corresponding English phrases 8.

The English speaking user can now communicate with the foreign language speaking person by selecting a phrase or combination of phrases on the English language Master card and indicating the corresponding phrase or phrases on the foreign language communication unit by ticking or otherwise marking the transparent plastics wallet 2 with the marker 5 and then showing the marked wallet 2 to the foreign language speaking person. Words can also be deleted from phrases 13 as appropriate also by appropriately marking the wallet 2, such words being identified with the assistance of the numbered boxes 10, 15.

In this way it will be appreciated that communication can be effected in a simple, convenient and reliable manner particularly having regard to the fact that it is not necessary for any words to be spoken.

Whilst reference has been made to the English language card as being the Master card it is of course to be understood that any of the cards in a set can be used as the Master card. Thus, dependent on the number of cards in each set, there will be a number of different possible combinations of languages in which communication can be effected.

If desired each card 6 may have phrases in different languages on both sides, such phrases preferably belonging to the same set and therefore being in correspondence with each other.

Appropriate spaces may be provided alongside or in the middle of certain phrases to enable a further word or words to be inserted by writing on the wallet 2, and an auxiliary phrase book or phrase card may be provided to assist in the selection of such further word or words.

Although the communication aid is intended primarily to assist in communication without requiring words to be spoken, if desired an auxiliary book or card may be provided which explains pronunciation, or there may be a guide to pronunciation on the cards 6.

With the embodiment of Fig. 2, a wallet assembly is used which comprises a first transparent wallet 20 adapted to receive a single Master card, a second transparent wallet 21 adapted to receive a single communication unit, a marker board 22 as hereinbefore described fixed behind the second wallet 21, and a third storage wallet (not visible) behind the marker board 22.

With this arrangement, transparent cards are used whereby the marker board 22 can be seen through a communication unit in the

second wallet 21, phrases may be printed on the cards in different colours to indicate subject matter and/or language. Words on the communication unit can thereby be indicated or deleted by appropriately marking the marker board 22 with a stylus 23. Such markings can subsequently be eradicated in conventional manner by pulling out the slider 24 of the marker board.

It is of course to be understood that the invention is not intended to be restricted to the details of the above embodiments which are described by way of example only.

Thus, for example, with the above embodiments individual words and phrases are enclosed in numbered boxes 10 for identification purposes. If desired, these boxes may be combined on each card to define an identification grid.

Further, although the above embodiments are described in relation to use by persons speaking different languages it is to be understood that the aid of the invention may be used for other purposes as for example in the case of communication with deaf and/or dumb persons.

WHAT I CLAIM IS:—

1. A communication aid comprising a container, a set of cards on each of which is a collection of communicable expressions, the different collections being respectively in different languages and the expressions of each collection corresponding respectively to the expressions of the or each other collection, location means in said container adapted to receive said set of cards with two cards of said set in relative side-by-side disposition whereby relative juxtaposition of said corresponding expressions is effected.

2. An aid according to claim 1 wherein the said expressions are of a visually alphanumeric nature.

3. An aid according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the said expressions are of a pictorial nature.

4. An aid according to any one of claims 1 to 3 comprising means adapted to indicate the correspondence of said expressions.

5. An aid according to claim 4 wherein the indication means comprises corresponding identification marks provided adjacent the corresponding expressions.

6. An aid according to claim 4 or claim 5 wherein the indication means comprises means for effecting arrangement of the respective collections of the or each set in predetermined physical relationship to each other whereby the correspondence between expressions is effected.

7. An aid according to any one of claims 4 to 6 wherein the expressions are of a composite nature, and the said indication means is adapted to indicate the correspondence of component parts of the composite expressions

as well as the correspondence of the expressions themselves.

8. An aid according to any one of claims 1 to 7 wherein there are a plurality of sets of cards, the cards of each set having expressions relating to a respective common subject.

9. An aid according to claim 8 wherein each card comprises identifying means adapted to indicate the set to which that card belongs.

10. An aid according to any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein said container comprises a transparent plastics wallet, each card being adapted to be inserted into the wallet.

11. An aid according to claim 10 further including a marker for use in marking the surface of the wallet to indicate a selected expression visible through the wallet.

12. A communication aid substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawing.

Agents for the Applicant,
SYDNEY E. M'CAW & CO.,
Chartered Patent Agents,
Saxone House,
52—56 Market Street,
Manchester M1 1PP.

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COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

1 SHEET

This drawing is a reproduction of
the Original on a reduced scale

